

INTERNATIONAL LABOUR  
OFFICE  
GENEVA

*Studies and Reports*  
*Series A*  
*No. 18.*

March 1921.

## First Special International Trade Union Congress

London, November 22-27, 1920

### CONTENTS

|   |    |
|---|----|
| INTRODUCTION  |    |
| <i>Retrospective</i> . . . . .  | 3  |
| <i>Composition of the London Congress</i> . . . . .   | 6  |
| <i>Agenda</i> . . . . .   | 6  |
| PROCEEDINGS OF THE CONGRESS   |    |
| <i>Opening Meeting. Retirement of the President of the I. F. T. U.</i> . . . . .                              | 7  |
| <i>The International Situation and the Relation to it of the International Trade Union Movement</i> . . . . . | 10 |
| <i>The Eight Hour Day</i> . . . . .   | 15 |
| <i>Report of the Ural Trade Unions</i> . . . . .  | 15 |
| <i>Pacifism</i> . . . . .   | 16 |
| <i>Distribution of Raw Materials for Industrial Purposes</i> . . . . .  | 16 |
| <i>The Question of the Rate of Exchange</i> . . . . .   | 18 |
| <i>Socialisation of the Means of Production</i> . . . . .   | 20 |
| <i>The Moscow International and the Attitude to be adopted thereto</i> . . . . .                              | 21 |
| <i>The Situation in the Ruhr District Closing. Meeting</i> . . . . .  | 25 |

### INTRODUCTION

#### *Retrospective.*

For more than thirty years past Trade Unions in a number of industries have possessed international agreements, occasionally even special Secretariats, known as "International Trade Secretariats", for maintaining their international relations. Even before these existed, repeated attempts were made, but without any permanent result, to organise all National Workers' Federations or National Federations of Trade Unions or National Commissions in a single international headquarters.

In 1901 a Scandinavian Trade Union Congress was held in Copenhagen and attended by representatives of the Trade Union Federation offices of Belgium, Germany, England and Finland, who had been invited to be present. The Scandinavians and the representatives of these invited countries then availed themselves of the opportunity of holding a first international conference of Trade Unions. It was proposed to convene regular international Trade Union Congresses, but this was rejected as premature. Nevertheless it was resolved to invite the governing bodies of all the National Federations, which were to send not more than two members to represent them, to attend international Trade Union Conferences, to take place at regular intervals. One such Conference was held in 1902, at Stuttgart, others at Dublin (1903), Amsterdam (1905), Christiania (1907), Paris (1909), Budapest (1911), and Zürich (1912).<sup>1</sup> Owing to the war the Conference which was to have been held at San Francisco in 1913 did not take place.<sup>2</sup>

At the Stuttgart Conference Carl Legien, President of the German National Federation, was appointed honorary International Secretary. His special duties were to consist in keeping Trade Unions in touch with one another, convening international conferences, preparing Trade Union statistics, etc. The subscription payable to the International Secretariat was very modest, having been at first 50 pfennigs per 1000 members per year, and afterward 1.50 marks. The annual receipts varied from 1000 to 10,000 marks, while the combined membership of the adherent National Federations varied from two to eight millions.

The work of the International Secretariat was very strictly defined; it was scrupulously careful to avoid having anything to do with political questions, indeed with any questions not directly connected with Trade Unionism. Thus the proposals of the French to discuss anti-militarism and a general strike were invariably declined as outside the scope of Trade Unions; and at the Paris Conference of 1909 the following resolution was passed, expressly for the guidance of future Conferences:—"All theoretical questions and such as relate to the tendencies and tactics of the Trade Union movement in any particular country shall be excluded from the discussions."

The number of those attending the Conferences was increased at Zürich in 1913 by allowing the Secretaries of the various International Federations to be present as visitors. This Conference immediately set to work to consider how to develop the international organisation of Trade Unions and

<sup>1</sup> See *International Report on the Trade Union Movement*. 10 annual volumes 1903 to 1912. Published by C. Legien, Berlin.

<sup>2</sup> A separate international organisation, covering the "Christian" Trade Union movement of various countries, sprang up much later. It will be dealt with in a separate study.

enlarge its activities; and proposals to this effect should have been submitted to the Conference planned for 1915. At the same time the title "International Federation of Trade Unions" was conferred upon the organisation, which was instructed to publish a periodical in several languages, and to organise a translation office for the needs of Trade Unions. A few months later, however, the outbreak of the war put an end to these plans.

During the war the Dutch National Federation in Amsterdam acted as intermediary between all the different countries, even organising International Conferences in Stockholm and Berne. True, delegates from the Allied countries could not attend, but the Stockholm and Berne Conferences agreed to the demands put forward by the Leeds Trade Union Conference of Allied Countries concerning the Peace Treaty, and drew up a detailed programme of their own concerning it.

The first General International Trade Union Conference after the war was held at Amsterdam, in August 1919. It definitely adopted the Constitution of the International Federation of Trade Unions, which was first asked for at the Zürich Conference, and which stipulated, among other things, that International Trade Union Congresses should be held at regular intervals, and that the I.F.T.U. should have an international Governing Body and a permanent Bureau. At the same time the headquarters were transferred to Amsterdam.

The following were appointed members of the Executive, to meet once a month: President, W. A. Appleton (England), Vice-Presidents, L. Jouhaux, (France), and C. Mertens (Belgium); Secretaries, J. Oudegeest and E. Fimmen (Holland): in addition, for the larger Executive, to meet half yearly, one member each from ten different groups of adherent countries.

According to regulations, the First International Trade Union Congress ought to be held in the autumn of 1921, but in view of recent events the Governing Body determined to convene a Special Congress before the close of 1920. This was held from November 22 to November 27, 1920, at the Holborn Restaurant, London.

#### *Composition of the London Congress*

The Trade Unions of seventeen different countries were represented by 95 delegates, as follows:—

| <i>Country</i> | <i>Organisation</i>   | <i>Membership</i> | <i>Delegates</i>  |
|----------------|---|-------------------|---|
| England        | Trade Union Congress<br>Parl. Comm. . . .                   | 6,500,000         | E. L. Poulton<br>J. H. Thomas<br>H. Gosling<br>A. B. Swales<br>Will Thorn<br>Miss M. Bondfield<br>R. B. Walker  |
|                | General Federation<br>of Trade Unions .                     |                   | T. Mallalieu<br>Alfred Short<br>Jos. Cross  |
| Germany        | Allgemeiner Deutscher<br>Gewerkschaftsbund                  | 8,500,000         | Carl Legien<br>P. Grassmann<br>Fr. Paeplow<br>Georg Schmidt<br>Josef Seitz<br>Josef Simon<br>Franz Scheffel<br>Louis Brunner<br>Robert Dissmann<br>Otto Hue<br>Otto Urban<br>Otto Streine |
| France         | Confédération Générale<br>du Travail . . . .                | 1,500,000         | L. Jouhaux<br>G. Dumoulin<br>M. Roux<br>J. Dasse<br>P. Perrot<br>V. Vandeputte<br>A. Bourderon<br>P. Chamoin<br>A. Merrheim<br>M. Bidegaray<br>Jeanne Bouvier<br>E. Vignaud<br>E. Imbs    |
| Belgium        | Commission Syndicale<br>de Belgique . . . .                 | 700,000           | C. Mertens<br>J. Baeck<br>L. Iris<br>E. Gryson<br>Ch. Hannick<br>A. Hellinckx<br>Emile Mallieu<br>J. Solau<br>P. Somers   |
| Denmark        | De Samvirkende<br>Fagforbund . . . .                        | 300,000           | C. F. Madsen<br>Martin Petersen<br>C. M. Lyngsie<br>H. Jacobsen<br>J. A. T. Hansen  |
| Norway         | Arbeidernes Faglige<br>Landsorganisation<br>i Norge . . . . | 150,000           | Oskar Olsen<br>Elias Volan<br>P. Aaroe<br>Halvard Olsen<br>Knut Eng   |

| <i>Country</i>  | <i>Organisation</i>                                     | <i>Member-<br/>ship</i> | <i>Delegates</i>  |
|-----------------|---|-------------------------|---|
| Sweden          | Landsorganisationen<br>i Sverige . . . .                | 281,000                 | A. Thorberg<br>Janne Jonsson<br>K. W. Holmström<br>Eric Lange   |
| Holland         | Nederlansch Verbond<br>van Vakvereenigingen             | 240,000                 | R. Stenhuis<br>P. v. d. Walle<br>Joh. Brautigam<br>A. W. Jensch<br>H. J. C. Heppener<br>N. Nathans<br>H. Schutjes<br>P. Dantz |
| Italy           | Confederazione Generale<br>del Lavoro . . . .           | 2,300,000               | L. d'Aragona<br>G. Baldesi<br>Mad. A. Altobelli<br>B. Buoazzi<br>T. Bruno   |
| Austria         | Gewerkschaftskommis-<br>sion Oesterreichs               | 800,000                 | A. Hueber<br>Franz Domes<br>Eduard Straas   |
| Czecho-Slovakia | Odborové Sdruzení<br>Československé . . .               | 750,000                 | R. Tayerle<br>Nomecek<br>Kadlec<br>Hais   |
| Hungary         | Ungarlaendischer Ge-<br>werkschaftsrat . . . .          | 215,000                 | G. Malasits<br>Samu Jászai  |
| Switzerland     | Union Syndicale Suisse                                  | 225,000                 | Karl Durr   |
| Luxembourg      | Commission Syndicale<br>de Luxembourg . . .             | 27,000                  | A. Krieps<br>J. P. Beck.  |
| Spain           | Unión General de<br>Trabajadores de<br>España . . . .   | 250,000                 | J. Besteiro<br>F. Largo Caballero   |
| Poland          | Komisja Centralna<br>Związków Zawo-<br>dowzkiek . . . . | 334,000                 | Alex. Debski<br>Z. Zulawski<br>J. Adamek  |
|                 | Zjednoczenie Za wodowe<br>Polskie . . . .               | 774,000                 | W. Grzeskowiak<br>G. Simon<br>E. Bernatowisz<br>S. Hellich<br>J. Rymer<br>L. Lesnienski                                       |
| Canada          | The Trades and Labor<br>Congress of Canada              | 260,000                 | H. J. Halford   |

The Congress was also attended by the Secretaries or representatives of the Secretariats of eighteen different Workers' Internationals, as follows :

| Name                | International Represented         |
|---------------------|-----------------------------------|
| J. H. Bowen         | Post and Telegraph                |
| T. Shaw M. P.       | Textile Workers                   |
| Frank Hodges        | Miners                            |
| Robert Williams     | Transport Workers                 |
| C. Woudenberg       | Woodworkers                       |
| G. J. A. Smit, Junr | Commercial and Clerical Employees |
| T. Van der Heeg     | Clothing Workers                  |
| T. Hiemstra         | Landworkers                       |
| H. Hochstrasser     | Bookbinders                       |
| Liochon             | Printers                          |
| J. G. v. Heusden    | Hotel Employees                   |
| C. Ilg              | Metal Workers                     |
| L. van Berckelaer   | Diamond Workers                   |
| Fr. Poels           | Lithographers                     |
| O. Streine          | Painters                          |
| J. Simon            | Boot and Shoe                     |
| R. Stenhuis         | Factory Workers                   |
| F. Paeplow          | Building Workers                  |

Furthermore, the following were present as visitors : two representatives of the German Trade Unions of Czechoslovakia, and one representative of the "Afa" or Arbeitsgemeinschaft freier Angestelltenverbände (Association of Free Office Workers), besides M. Albert Thomas, Director of the International Labour Office.

### Agenda

The following Agenda was placed before the Congress :—

1. The International Situation, and the Relation of the International Trade Union Movement thereto. Reporter : E. Fimmen, Holland.
2. The Distribution of Raw Materials for Industrial Purposes. Reporter : C. Mertens, Belgium.
3. The Question of the Rate of Exchange. Reporter : L. Jouhaux, France.
4. Socialisation of the Means of Production. Reporter : J. Oudegeest, Holland.
5. Report of the Commission on Conditions in the Ruhr Basin. Reporter : L. Jouhaux, France.

This Agenda paper shows clearly what a complete metamorphosis the Trade Unions of all countries have undergone. Only a few years ago International Trade Union Conferences would have rejected the whole of it as coming within the scope of the political or socialist International. Now, however, in all countries it is considered a matter of course that the scope of the work of Trade Unions must include all questions, no matter of what kind, affecting the condition of the workers. The divisions in the political International have weakened or entirely severed the tie between it and

the Trade Unions — a tie which in many countries has been a very close one, as was proved by the direct representation of Trade Unions at the Congresses of the Socialist International. Now, however, the Trade Unions have organised their own International.

### PROCEEDINGS OF THE CONGRESS.

*Opening Meeting. Retirement of the President of the I. F. T. U.*

Mr. L. Jouhaux (France), one of the Vice-presidents of the International Federation of Trade Unions, delivered the following inaugural address :—

Comrades, owing to exceptional circumstances, it is to me that the honour falls of opening this International Labour Congress and of offering fraternal greetings to the accredited representatives of the workers in the different countries, representing the majority of the industrial population throughout the world.

This Special Congress, necessitated by that reaction which is now spreading over the whole surface of the globe, proves the vitality of the Trade Union International, which has been resuscitated after an interval of years, and to which some 25 million organised workers already belong.

It is a confused and difficult task we have before us. We have a great deal of powerful opposition to overcome, but we ought not to shrink from this, nor abandon the hope of removing the obstacles confronting us. Our first aim in these troublous times must be to create an international moral standard accepted and agreed to by all. Such a standard would infuse new life into our movement and likewise enable us to concentrate all our endeavours on the same ideas and the same principles — the reconstruction of the world by labour, above all on the basis of the rights of labour.

We must let the dead past bury its dead formulae. They have weighed far too long on the working classes. They have been far too long a cloak for the inhuman doctrine of force, whose price has always had to be paid by the peoples. When the terrible tempest which has passed over us ended, the people, bowed down with grief and sorrow, hoped for the dawn of a new world, hoped that we were standing on the threshold of a new era when nations would understand one another, help one another, and unite all their intellectual and material forces in order that Right might at last prevail. That Right would prevail was the one dominant thought shining like a light in the pitch darkness of those days; tortured humanity began shaking off its fetters.

This hope speedily vanished, these delusions were soon destroyed; and evil instincts, newly aroused and encouraged by imperialistic greed and by the militarist forces in this old world of ours — forces which have certainly been driven back, but are still powerful, — quickly stifled those nobler feelings and better principles which excess of suffering had bred in the hearts of the peoples.

Far from listening to or honestly trying to understand the wishes of the masses, the governments obstinately entrenched themselves behind their narrow-minded ideas, inspired by national selfishness, utterly failing to realise that the time had come when the people saw that society must be born again. Diplomacy, that worthless and degenerate thing, re-established the world on obsolete formulae and false principles, trod under foot the undertakings solemnly entered into with the peoples, and once more plunged the world, and Europe in particular, into the old intrigues and confronted them with the old dangers.

The propertied classes, alike capitalistic and reactionary, are incapable of realising through what critical times we are passing, or what hopeful times they might become if only the nations were brought together for purposes of mutual help and fraternal cooperation to further the general

good of man, instead of being incited one against the other and their national hatred inflamed. They are wholly incapable of grasping the value of this profound truth, borne out as it is by facts. All they can do is once more to apply the old, Macchiavellian dictum "*Divide et impera*" — divide and rule, — thus plunging the world again into a chaos, the only possible result of which will be to increase the devastation and suffering caused by the war.

Even now, two years after the armistice, the world, this old Europe, is not at peace! Once more the doctrine of power and force has prevailed over the right of peoples both to decide their own destinies and to govern themselves. Yet is it not the unalterable and inviolable right of all peoples to have a government after their own hearts? Is it not a crime to insist on altering a constitution which a nation of its own free will has elected to have? It is owing to outrageously reactionary backslidings such as these that the world has been again involved in war, and the labouring classes, who had ventured for a moment to hope that at last peace would prevail and they would be able to enjoy the fruits of their labour, are once more exposed to the hardships of intellectual and material misery and consequently undergo their former sufferings.

Protests and cries of indignation are arising on every hand; and it is in response to these appeals for help that the International Federation of Trade Unions has now convened this Special Congress. The International Federation of Trade Unions is the conscious expression of the hopes and desires of the working classes in all countries; and as such it must oppose to all insolent and aggressive reactionaries the united front of working class forces — forces kept together by one and the same idea, that of resistance to oppression and liberation from all serfdom.

Here in Europe it is our duty to silence the clamour of the militarists, to shatter the plans of the reactionaries, to protect and extend the hard-won liberties of the workers and to defend against all attacks the right of association, these being the main foundations of all social progress. Our loftiest duty throughout the world, however, is to lend an ear to the cries for help reaching us from our brother workers, even more exploited than ourselves. They also are insisting on the cessation of that bondage in which it has been possible hitherto to keep them, in absolute contradiction to the most elementary principles of humanity and solely in the interests of the profits of capitalists, the promoters of the war.

We owe it to ourselves, indeed, to proclaim that the world cannot be reconstructed save on a new basis, that of solidarity and collaboration between nation and nation. But this will be impossible until capitalist privileges have been abolished and all natural wealth and the means of production restored to the community in general. Throughout the world at present efforts are needed to increase production; but such efforts can not be made except to satisfy the requirements of the community in general. The new order of things must be built up on the abolition of all armaments, the international distribution of raw materials, and the socialisation of the means of transport and production. Everything else results only in continuation of the present confusion, disorder and ever-increasing wretchedness. The plain fact is that there is no other way of saving the world.

This is the programme which the International Federation of Trade Unions has adopted. This is the programme which it submits to you, the accredited representatives of workers throughout the world, asking you to examine it and give it your approval.

It is towards us that the hopes of the workers and the fears of the ruling classes are just now directed; and we must leave no stone unturned to fulfil the one and justify the other. It is certainly not too much to say that out of this special Congress social upheaval may proceed, if only we word our resolutions clearly and then show that we really mean to act upon them.

Everything points to the collapse of the old world, a collapse which is being hastened by the selfishness of the propertied classes and the incapacity of the rulers to grasp the problems of the time. On the horizon the dawn of a new era is breaking — a dawn as yet but faint. Its beams have many a dark cloud to pierce, but despite all they will in the end shine through.

Great though our disappointments have been, they have never been able to subject our souls to any depressing doubts. We cling as closely as ever to our ideals of the reconciliation of mankind and of a happiness embracing the whole world. Of these ideals the International Federation of Trade Unions is the embodiment, and it must supply us with the means of realising them.

In conclusion I repeat our appeal: Workers of the world, unite! Workers of the world, forward towards the conquest of the new world!

After the announcement that the former president of the International Federation of Trade Unions, Mr. W. A. Appleton (England), had resigned shortly before the Congress, the delegation of the country in which the Congress was sitting was requested, according to custom, to appoint the Chairman for the meetings. The British delegation accordingly proposed Mr. J. H. Thomas, M. P., General Secretary of the National Union of Railwaymen.

Mr. J. H. Thomas then addressed the Congress as follows:—

This Congress is the best proof that the war is over. We are welcoming the representatives not only of our former Allies and of neutral countries, but also of countries with which only a few months ago we were engaged in a life and death struggle. What the world needs more than anything else is peace. We ought to endeavour to forget the events of the last six years as quickly as possible. We have all had quite enough experience of the misery and suffering caused by the war, not only to the vanquished but also to the victors. Only an international organisation of workers can ensure the world's remaining at peace.

In certain circles we are considered "yellow". To this I will merely reply that we are striving after a free world, and after freedom and justice for the working classes. The difference between us and those who call us yellow is this: we do not believe that the necessary changes can be brought about by a bloody revolution. The Congress will deal with this problem, also with the question of the lack of raw materials, which means acute distress for many lands; and with stock exchange speculation and its disastrous results for the whole world.

In answer to a question put by Mr. Solau (Belgium) as to the reasons for the absence of the Americans, Mr. Fimmen stated that no direct communication on the subject had been received. When attacks on the International Federation of Trade Unions appeared in the Press, it was learned therefrom that the Americans would not send delegates, because at this Special Congress they could not discuss the principles and policy of the International, of which they disapprove. Moreover, since the Amsterdam Congress the relations of the American Federation of Labour with the I. F. T. U. could not have been worse. Of more than fifty letters sent to Washington only about four had been answered.

Mr. Halford (Canada) thought that the absence of the Americans might be explained because they considered the subscriptions to the International too high.

Mr. Fimmen replied that the reason was obviously that the I. F. T. U. was too revolutionary for the Americans.

### *The International Situation and the Relation to it of the International Trade Union Movement*

The Reporter, Mr. Fimmen spoke as follows on this subject :—

The non-socialist classes in all countries, who for a little while after the war were ready everywhere to make great concessions to the workers, are once more on the high road to inscribe the blackest reaction on their banner. The worst instance is probably in Hungary, where membership of a Trade Union organisation means arrest, torture and death, all without trial. The International Federation of Trade Unions has endeavoured to improve conditions in Hungary by means of a general boycott, by which it was intended also to affect the Entente Governments, because by their silence they approve of Hungarian tyranny. Unhappily this first attempt only partly succeeded, and crime and murder still continue in Hungary.

In Finland, where the ruling classes have taken sanguinary revenge on the workers for having risen against them, conditions are not much better ; but Finland and Hungary are countries in which the labouring classes over-estimated their own strength, and thus were unable to withstand the onslaughts of the ruling classes.

In Spain, also, the working class is in desperate straits. Civil liberty is abolished, and hundreds of workmen are in gaol. In Greece and Yugoslavia a similar state of things prevails, and there also the aim of the reactionaries is the destruction of the Trade Union movement.

The only countries where conditions can be described as somewhat better are those Western lands where trade unions are fairly strongly organised ; but even in France, after the last Railway Workers' strike, the Government proceeded in the most utterly ruthless way against all who had in any way taken part in it. At present an action is pending against Jouhaux and his colleagues on the Executive of the General Confederation of Labour, because they allowed Government officials' organisations to join the General Confederation of Labour. Recently the British Government was empowered, in theory at all events, to arrest strike leaders and to take other measures calculated to prevent all strikes. In America, during the great struggles of the railway workers and metal workers, the Government likewise sided with the employers. Indeed, it repeatedly happened there that a majority in a State Assembly simply declined to work with legally elected deputies put forward as labour representatives, declaring they were not entitled to sit.

All this proves how ruthlessly capitalists are defending their privileges. There is no better instance of this than the Eight Hour Day. Last year in Washington a beginning was made with international legislation for the protection of labour, and a convention concerning the Eight Hour Day was even accepted. As yet, however, the Governments have done nothing to enforce this, and have not ratified it, so that the Director of the International Labour Office has been obliged to tour Europe in order to remind the Governments of the necessity for putting the Conventions into operation. The Eight Hour Day Convention has not been ratified even in the countries where the workers have already enforced it through their Trade Unions. On the contrary, the employers are more and more attempting to increase the hours of work, which proves that the Washington Conventions were accepted largely because the dominant classes were then afraid of the workers. Since then this fear has given place to universal reaction; indeed in many places semi-official strike breakers' organisations are being formed, with the help of students and former officers.

In these circumstances how ought we to act ? It is satisfactory that the workers should have come together again so soon after the war. As early as March 1919, four months after the armistice, the Transport Workers met at an International Conference in order to make it clear that no cleavage existed among the workers throughout the world, and that they were determined to collaborate for freedom and socialism. Since then a number

of International Trades Conferences have taken place, among others, in August 1919, the First General Conference of Trade Unions of all countries. These Conferences have reconstructed our International Federation of Trade Unions so that it is now stronger than ever. As long ago as August 1919, the Trade Union International put in a protest against the blockade of Russia, and advocated the socialisation of all means of production.

Our development involves the extension of the scope of our labours. We can no longer confine ourselves to questions of wages, hours of labour, and protection of workers. Time was when everything outside these questions was relegated to political parties, but experience during the war in all countries has shown that everything which might affect the condition of the workers must be included in the scope of Trade Union labours. As the boycott of Hungary and the prevention of any arms being conveyed to Poland or Russia prove, we lost no time in trying to put into practice the principles accepted last year at Amsterdam.

By the threat of a general strike in Denmark at the beginning of the year, the Trade Unions saved the country's constitution. The German Trade Unions also saved their republic by a general strike in March, and this wholly political action on their part proves the growth of fresh tendencies in the Trade Union movement throughout the world — tendencies which we must promote and concentrate in our struggle against reaction and for a reconstituted society. We see more and more clearly how little all our achievements are worth so long as the capitalist class is still able to let loose the dogs of war and thus destroy all the progress hitherto attained. Therefore our first and foremost task is to fight militarism. Whatever we undertake, however, we must not over-estimate our own strength, nor under-estimate that of our adversaries ; and we must reflect that our 24 million members must first be educated to be ready to make any sacrifices which may still be necessary.

That the true spirit of international solidarity does not yet prevail everywhere is shown by the absence of Americans and Russians from this Congress owing to the attitude of their leaders. Their collaboration would have immensely strengthened our International. Since the war ended we have been trying to get into touch with Russia, but all our letters and telegrams have remained unanswered; it is only through the Press that we know what preposterous assertions about us and attacks upon us the Russians are making. According to them, we have been bought by the capitalists; we are yellow, social patriots, etc. etc. Yet ours is the only organisation which has given Russian workers practical proofs of solidarity. No Bolshevik organisation has as yet done so. We "yellow" men and "social patriots" have unquestionably helped Russia to conclude peace with Poland; and that Trade Unions in the far West and East hold aloof from us is all the more regrettable inasmuch as it is due solely to ignorance.

Assuredly we must continue the fight for higher wages and shorter working hours, but in so doing we ought not to forget that these are not the main things. It is much more important that the workers' energy should be concentrated more and more on great issues, instead of continuing to be frittered away on side issues. Here the International Trade Secretariats should help us.

Mr. Grassmann (Germany) then addressed the Conference as follows :—

The German working classes have got rid of the former reign of militarism, which can never return, as the events of last March prove. But if we oppose the lust of power of the extreme Right, we decline no less flatly to be dictated to by the Left. We do not hope anything from communist cavalry charges; as the examples of Hungary and Munich show, they simply prepare the way for the worst reaction. Instead of a revolution in words, we want a revolution equivalent to an organised attempt to construct a genuine economic and political democracy. The present republican system of government in Germany is beyond doubt one of the most powerful barriers against reaction, whether in the form

of the dictatorship of a William or in that of the domination of a clique or minority. Just before we left we heard that the Moscow people had been attacking our Trade Unions again, that, in fact, a plan of campaign was to be directed against us. We would answer that we have made up our minds no longer to continue on the defensive as regards Moscow, but to proceed to an attack ourselves. At the same time we shall thoroughly enlighten the workers as to the consequences and dangers of Bolshevism.

The speaker then quoted some passages from the recently published statutes of the Moscow Trade Union International<sup>1</sup>, and begged the Congress to approve the reply recently sent to the Moscow people by the Executive of the I. F. T. U.

Mr. Basteiro (Spain) complained bitterly of conditions in his country. Last year the Government conferred dictatorial powers upon a General, who arbitrarily dissolved the Trade Unions, and caused the leaders to be arrested, deported and dragged about from one prison to another. It was impossible

<sup>1</sup> Provisional Statutes of the International Council of Trade Unions (Moscow):

#### I. Title.

The title "Provisional International Council" of Trade Unions shall be conferred upon the temporary international association created in agreement with the Trade Union representatives of various countries.

#### II. Objects.

The objects of the Provisional International Council shall be the following:

1. To conduct widespread propaganda and agitation for the ideas of revolutionary class warfare and social revolution, working-class dictatorship, and revolutionary mass action, to bring about the overthrow of capitalist systems and of civic government.

2. To wage fierce warfare on two plagues, which are ruining the Trade Union movement throughout the world,—intercourse between the workers and the property-owning class, and the hope of a peaceful transition from capitalism to socialism.

3. To unite all the revolutionary elements of the Trade Union movement throughout the world, and to wage determined warfare upon the League of Nations, including the International Labour Office, also upon the programme and policy of the Amsterdam International Federation of Trade Unions.

4. To initiate international campaigns in the matter of outstanding features of class warfare, to make collections in aid of the strikers during the great social struggle, etc.

5. To collect all materials, such as statistics and papers, which throw any light upon the international Trade Union movement; and to supply all organisations joining the International Council with information about the state of the labour movement in different countries.

#### III. Composition.

The Council shall include one representative of each of the following countries: Russia, Italy, Spain, South America, Bulgaria and Georgia, also one representative of every organisation joining the International Association of Trade Unions. The Council shall also include one representative of the Executive Committee of the Third Communist International. It shall elect the Executive Bureau of three persons, among them the General Secretary of the Council and a representative of the Executive Committee of the Third Communist International.

Note: In the case of revolutionary Trade Union organisations which have not yet expressed their views sufficiently clearly on the question of working-class dictatorship, international workers all over the world,

to found new Trade Unions, for the authorities would not give the necessary permission to do so, and now the government insisted upon forcing through a special law against "Working-class Terrorism", whereas in reality all the terrorism came from itself and from the employers, whose anti-strike organisation had already cost numbers of workers their lives.

The speaker urged the International Federation of Trade Unions to send a commission to Spain to enquire into the conditions of the working classes there.

Mr. d'Aragona (Italy) was glad that the efforts made to enlarge the scope of the work of the Trade Union International had succeeded, but regretted that the resolution before the Congress did not give any details as to what was to be done. He reminded the Congress that the present reaction had been partly brought about by the attitude of many Trade Unions during the war.

Italian workers have always been fighting against capitalists and trying to remain united with their class comrades, even outside their own country. They are strong enough to keep reaction in check in their own country; and when you find the papers reporting violent reprisals in Italy, you must not overlook the fact that a good deal must be set down to different mentality and the influence of climate. True, we have not a legal eight hours' working day yet, but in practice it prevails almost everywhere. Just now our Trade Unions are fighting for the control of production, but not in order to leave it entirely to the workers employed in the different branches in each case. On the contrary, what we want is that the whole movement should exercise supervision over production in the interests of the community in general.

and other matters, the Council shall instruct the Executive Bureau to appeal to the said organisations to submit these questions, as proposed, to all their sections for discussion, and summon them to take part in the International Conference.

#### IV. Journal.

The Executive Bureau shall issue a Journal in four languages, to be called the "Journal of the Provisional International Council of the Trade Union Left".

#### V. Conference.

Only such Trade Unions and minority Trade Unions as are waging revolutionary class warfare in their own countries and advocating working class dictatorship shall be invited to attend the International Conference. National Trade Union Federations, individual Trade Union associations, and international Federations may be represented at the Conference on the conditions enumerated below.

The following shall be the system of representation at the International Conference. National Trade Union headquarters, individual associations, or minority associations, with a membership of not less than 500,000, shall send two delegates. For every additional 500,000 organised members, they shall send one more delegate.

International headquarters of individual Trade Unions shall be allowed to send one delegate with a deliberative vote; individual Trade Unions shall be admitted only in case the Trade Union headquarters of their country is not attending the International Conference.

#### VI. Meeting Place.

The International Conference of the International Council shall meet at Moscow, on January 1st, 1921.

The International, Berlin, 28/11/20.

Mr. Halford (Canada) pointed out that the Canadian Trade Union Congress, whose delegate he was, was affiliated to the American Federation of Trade Unions, and, like it, was a purely Trade Union organisation, which had adopted a well defined attitude to labour legislation, whereas this Congress apparently represented a purely political and revolutionary body. Therefore he could not vote for the resolutions before them.

The Chairman, Mr. J. H. Thomas, said that the previous speaker was wrong in his assumptions, and reminded him that adherent organisations of course remained free as regards their own decisions.

Mr. Volan (Norway) declared that he was against the League of Nations in its present form and against its adjunct the International Labour Office, and therefore he must vote against the parts of the resolutions referring to them.

The Reporter, Mr. Fimmen, briefly replied to the speakers, begging as many of them as possible to vote for the resolution. The American Trade Unions at their last Congress discussed the nationalisation of railways and demanded the establishment of an Irish Republic; they could hardly now reproach the International with busying itself with polities. He insisted that the Bureau had repeatedly held out the right hand of friendship to their Russian fellow-workers, but the only answer had been violent personal attacks. It was now for the Russians to make advances. He would remind the Norwegian delegates that collaborating with governments and employers in the International Labour Office was neither more nor less than collaborating with the same sets of people in national parliaments. Moreover, all countries benefited by the work of the International Labour Office, especially countries in which the workers were not yet strong enough themselves to enforce an improvement in their conditions.

The following resolution was then passed by 21,906,000 votes to 2,710,000, Canada, Italy and Norway voting against :

That this International Trade Union Congress in London, assembled from the 22nd to the 27th November 1920, emphatically protests against all open and covert attempts of the dominant class and their governments throughout the world to suppress the freedom of organisation and action of the workers.

This International Congress expresses its sympathy with those who have suffered, or are still suffering, in the various countries at the hands of reaction; and returns thanks to those workers who have faithfully carried out their international obligations in the struggle against the White Terror in Hungary, and in the stoppage of all transport of lethal weapons for the counter-revolutionary armies.

This Congress raises an emphatic protest against the military and commercial war still carried on against Russia.

This International Congress declares that it is a primary duty of all National Trade Union centres affiliated to the International Federation

of Trade Unions, of all its International Trade Secretariats, and of all workers belonging to their respective Organisations, to use all and every means to fight the world reaction which threatens the growth, existence and the very life of the Trade Union Movement.

This International Congress is of the opinion that the Trade Union Movement, both National and International, besides systematic pursuit for better conditions of labour, must join issue with capitalism and imperialism throughout the world.

This International Congress declares that above all things militarism must be combatted in every form.

This International Congress declares that the Trade Union Movement of all countries should resort to general withdrawal of labour and to international boycott as a stern and effectual weapon in the fight against reaction and for progress.

This International Congress declares that their accomplishment engenders the greatest possible unity and solidarity among the workers in all countries and of all trades. It sends an urgent appeal to all affiliated centres and to all International Trade Secretariats to co-operate persistently with the International Federation of Trade Unions for consolidated action for the use of these methods; and by thorough and effective propaganda to impress on the working classes of all countries the necessity for international mass action in the assault on reaction, in declaring war against war, and for the realisation of a new social system.

#### *The Eight Hour Day*

The following resolution on the Eight Hour Day was passed after a short debate, and after the abandonment of a proposal to delete all mention of the International Labour Office, presented by Norway, Italy, Luxembourg, Canada and France, and based on arguments sometimes diametrically opposed :

That this Special International Trade Union Congress, assembled in London on 22nd. November and following days, notes that at the International Labour Conference held at Washington a draft agreement was adopted, in which the principles were outlined for the application of the 8 hour working day and 48 hour working week to industrial establishments.

Furthermore, that the Labour Statutes of certain states already conform to the decisions of the Washington Commission. In most countries, however, the employers and governments not only attempt to obstruct ratification of the convention, but also endeavour to re-impose longer hours of labour where the 48 hour working week has been introduced.

This International Trade Union Congress raises an emphatic protest against the hostile attitude to Labour on the part of both employers and their governments, and demands the full recognition and enforcement of the Washington decisions.

This International Trade Union Congress imposes the obligation on all affiliated organisations to frustrate with all available means the attempts to shelve the convention of Washington ; it therefore demands the constant support of all sections in the inevitable struggle for the eight hour working day.

This International Trade Union Congress refuses to lend further trade union support to the efforts of the International Labour Office if the ratification of the decisions made at Washington is not effected within the period already fixed.

#### *Report on the Ural Trade Unions*

At the opening of the third day's session the Chairman informed the Congress of a memorandum addressed to it by Russian Trade Unionists in London, representing themselves

as delegates sent to England by the Ural Trade Unions (numbering about 145,000 members), and by the last Congress of Free Trade Unions in Russia. They wished to state that, since the Soviet authorities had converted the workers' organisations into mere bureaucratic pieces of machinery, so that they could no longer agitate for higher wages, for instance, an independent Trade Union movement had ceased to exist in Russia. Furthermore, they said that it was impossible for the workers in Russia to give free expression to their opinions, owing to the state of economic and political serfdom prevailing there. Trade Union leaders were actually in great danger of persecution, and many of them had been shot, interned or forced to flee the country. The signatories said that they were confident that Russian Trade Unions would also join the International Federation of Trade Unions directly freedom had been sufficiently restored in their country to allow of their doing so.

*Pacifism.*

Mr. Fimmen, on behalf of the Bureau of the International Federation of Trade Unions, submitted the following resolution on the question of pacifism, which was unanimously passed :—

That this International Trade Union Congress declares that the struggle against all war on the part of the workers' International must not be confused with the pacifism of the capitalist bourgeoisie.

This Congress further declares to be hypocritical and totally condemns all belligerent measures made with the object of imposing new political or economic conditions upon the nations against their will.

The working class demands a complete and lasting peace between all nations and refuses to allow itself to be misled once more by the pretext to fight for a final war or for a war with the alleged object of ending war.

*Distribution of Raw Materials for Industrial Purposes.*

The Reporter, Mr. Mertens (Belgium) supplemented the written report on this question submitted by him to the Congress, as follows :—

The distribution of raw materials has already been discussed at the International Trade Union Conference held at Berne in February 1919; and at the Washington Conference a proposal was put forward by Signor Baldesi, the Italian workers' delegate, that the League of Nations should discuss the matter. This, however, was rejected by 43 votes to 40. Since then the Governing Body of the International Labour Office has rejected a similar proposal by one vote. The International Federation of Trade Unions has sent in a request to the same effect to the Council of the League of Nations. The International Miners' Congress in Geneva also insisted that raw materials ought to be distributed so that every country might receive its due share. In so doing the most important principle must be that no country well supplied with raw materials shall have a right to withhold from others its natural resources, which must be considered rather as belonging to the community of nations. As we ourselves are not in a position to create an organisation capable of ensuring this being done, we must once more appeal to the League of Nations to organise the distribution of raw materials. When it is said that the workers cannot feel sufficient confidence in the League of Nations as at present constituted, the answer

is that we must strive to exert more influence on the League, and particularly on the International Labour Office, one in four of the members of whose Governing Body is already a workers' delegate.

Mr. Baldesi (Italy) violently attacked the League of Nations, saying that the workers must not look to it for help, for it had not even kept the promises it made in Washington about introducing legislation for the protection of labour. They had better compel their own governments to convene an International Conference to settle this question. The League of Nations was a league of victors, whose special aim it was to rob Germany of everything she possessed, as witness the demands that she should deliver up her cows, etc.

The Chairman, Mr. J. H. Thomas, speaking on behalf of the British delegation, declared that we ought not to reject every resolution simply because it contained a reference to the League of Nations and the International Labour Office. The League of Nations could really become the most powerful instrument of peace if all nations belonged to it, and this was what we must aim at. In this sense the British delegates would vote for the resolution, at the same time expressing the opinion that the League of Nations must be improved.

Mr. Halford (Canada) opposed the resolution on the ground that it would involve too much interference with the sovereign right of every country to dispose of its own natural resources.

Mr. Dürr (Switzerland) was in favour of the first part of the resolution, but not of the second, because the International Labour Office had no power to do what the resolution asked. It would be far better to give the countries possessing raw materials lessons in solidarity, and for the Trade Unions to take action to compel the governments to come to friendly understandings with one another.

The following resolution was then passed unanimously, except that the Italian and Norwegian delegates took exception to any reference to the League of Nations and the International Labour Office :—

That this Congress of the International Federation of Trade Unions, assembled in London November 22nd and following days, holds that in view of the fact that the world war has brought about in the countries of Europe an upheaval so great as to endanger their economic restoration;

Being of opinion that the latter chiefly depends upon a world-wide solution applicable to the question of raw material;

Being convinced that the countries which have no raw materials depend for their industries upon those countries which possess these materials either through the natural fertility of their soil or on account of their favourable position;

Seeing that, consequently, one of the most essential preconditions of economic restoration is a just and fair distribution of the total available world supply of raw materials;

That this Congress, in consideration of the fact that the restoration of the capitalist system of society is a hindrance to efficient distribution of raw materials, by which everyone would be enabled without distinction to take full part in the world community of interests;

In consideration of the fact that it is consequently the constant duty of organised workers to work for the dissolution of present day society, with

its concomitant disorganisation, to strive for a rational organisation of production and distribution and to effect a complete understanding between the nations;

As it is a solemn duty of mankind to ensure equal distribution of all available raw materials throughout the world, and as distribution can only take place through international understanding, promoted by the efforts of the Trade Union International;

Being convinced that under present conditions the International Labour Office of the League of Nations is the organisation most suited to bring about such an international agreement;

The Congress :  
instructs the Bureau of the International Federation of Trade Unions to draft forthwith plans for the formation of an International Centre for Distribution of Raw Materials, this plan to be submitted to the International Labour Office for immediate execution. In order to promote the equitable and efficient distribution of raw materials, and in consideration of present and likely conditions of economic life among the nations, it is necessary that all nations and peoples shall be eligible to affiliate to the League of Nations.

### *The Question of the Rate of Exchange*

The Reporter, Mr. Jouhaux (France), who had submitted to the Congress both a written report and a resolution on the rate of exchange, said :

The present condition of the exchanges is disastrous for all countries, even for those with a high rate, because they can no longer dispose of their products in countries with a low rate. Above all what is wanted is to fix the amount of the indemnity without delay, so that an international loan may be floated. Unfortunately the governments, particularly those of the Allies, still oppose any such step, apparently because they fear it may lead to Germany's recovery, which would nevertheless be to their advantage. We French workers are out and out internationalists and for the reconciliation of all nations, even for reconciliation with our German fellow workers. It is urgently necessary for all nations to combine to find a remedy for the present economic crisis, both in countries with a high exchange and in countries with a low one. The resolution suggests thoroughly practical and feasible ways of doing this. Similar suggestions, indeed, have been recommended by official Government Conferences.

Mr. Buozzi (Italy), opposed the clause of the resolution before the Congress referring this question to the League of Nations, urging that it would be better to force the Governments to convene an International Economic Conference, which should possess the necessary legislative powers for solving this problem. He strongly supported the clause in the resolution which proposed the repudiation of war debts, and, like his friends, stated that he would be glad to see a demand that all claims for compensation should be wiped out.

Mr. Solau (Belgium) asked whether the resolution was to be interpreted as a demand for the repudiation of all claims for reparations. The Belgians, who had been obliged to sacrifice so much in the war, could never agree to that.

The Reporter, Mr. Jouhaux, while advocating direct action, said the Trade Unions were not yet strong enough to solve the problem of the rate of exchange; and for this reason, if for no other, they must apply to the League of Nations, while

of course endeavouring at the same time to bring increased Trade Union pressure to bear upon it. At all events this was better and quicker than convening an Economic Conference (which, after all, would only be a small reproduction of the League of Nations) and then seeking to influence it. Amounts due for reparations were not included in the resolution.

The following resolution was then passed by roll-call, Norway, Italy and Canada voting against, while Belgium voted only against the clause dealing with the repudiation of war debts, and the British delegation refrained from voting :

That this International Congress, in consideration of the crisis in international exchange, which is not only destructive for those countries devastated by war, but also threatens the most favoured countries with paralysis of international trade, with all its inevitable consequences, and through which the workers suffer ; declares :—

That such conditions of affairs cannot last without completely dislocating the circulation of raw materials and manufactured goods, the supply of food commodities and the restoration of devastated areas.

That the condition of bankruptcy with which many countries are actually faced is accompanied by remarkable prosperity of banking houses; that this indicates the grim consequences of the capitalist system, which promotes stock exchange speculations, an unjustified decline of the rate of exchange and violent fluctuations of the prices of food commodities, and confronts the nations with a prospect of famine.

This Congress therefore declares that the solution of international financial problems is inseparable from the economic and solidarious existence of the nations.

This Congress therefore recommends the universal and mutual repudiation of international war debts as one of the best means of counteracting the effects of the crisis in exchange at the present time.

That national and international measures, where possible, should be taken against unrestricted circulation of fiduciary issues and to limit present day currencies to normal proportions;

That a necessary step hereto is the withdrawal of unnecessary issues, particularly for military purposes, and the levying of a comprehensive tax on capital.

This Congress regards these international measures as of paramount importance, for without them the exertions of various countries will remain futile, and the majority of nations will not be embraced.

International measures must proceed on lines other than the mere concession of fresh commercial credits. This can only be accomplished if and when the League of Nations or an Organisation attached thereto promotes an International Loan on the security of the wealth and resources of all nations without exception. The amount should be placed at the disposal of the various countries, in accordance with their needs and under the control of the League of Nations, for the sole and exclusive betterment of their financial position and for the restoration and advancement of production.

This Congress urges that these measures must not serve any military purpose; and that all efforts made by the nations must be concentrated for the achievement of universal peace.

This Congress declares that the measures should be accomplished within a given period; that they are uniform with the other demands of the working class. International affecting production, distribution of raw materials, and the control of transport. Like the above, Congress concurs in the attempt to achieve the restoration of the world by labour and by the promotion of solidarity among the nations.

*The Socialisation of the Means of Production.*

The Reporter, Mr. Oudegeest (Holland), who had also submitted a full report in writing, said:

The present capitalist system of production and distribution is so bad, if only because of its mad wastefulness, that it must be abolished. Today socialisation is being advocated not only by Socialists and independent Trade Unions, but also by the Christian Trade Unions and prominent personages in other walks of life. The workers as a whole, who do not see why they should work any more for the benefit of a few individuals, are bringing tremendous pressure to bear against the ever-increasing accumulation of all power in the hands of the capitalist class. They will have nothing more to do with the present system of production, which aims only at money-making and not at the welfare of the community in general. In his greed of gain the capitalist even goes the length of limiting production directly his high prices are menaced, as witness the decisions of the tea-growers and of those interested in rubber, and many other quite recent examples which might be instanced. A little while ago, when there were very large hauls of fish, British fishermen threw quantities of their fish back into the sea again, while German fishermen laid up their boats for a fortnight rather than let prices fall. And all the time there is the most terrible famine in Central Europe.

The same people, however, are clamouring that the workers must increase their output so that production may also be increased, but they are condemning a large proportion of workers to permanent unemployment. On the other hand, the production of luxury articles might very well be limited, and instead more necessities be produced, but there can be no real improvement unless we begin by socialising at any rate the mining industry and means of transport. Other great industries should be socialised as soon as possible afterwards. As the resolution before the Congress says, no stone must be left unturned to bring this about, for if we do not now succeed in causing a serious beginning to be made with socialisation, then there is not much prospect of our succeeding in doing so for a whole generation to come.

Mr. Dissmann (Germany) was glad that the question of socialisation had come up for discussion at the International Trade Union Congress. For the workers it was the most important question of the day; it ought to be their rallying point in all countries, and it must be their watchword with regard to the League of Nations. The leaders of the Trade Union International must therefore be careful to ensure the distribution of information about economic conditions in all countries, and must make vigorous efforts to see that the resolution was carried out.

After a few more brief remarks, the following resolution was carried unanimously:—

That this International Trade Union Congress, assembled in London on the 22nd. November 1920, and following days, condemns the capitalist system of production, which functions to the prejudice of the community and to the sole advantage of certain individuals.

Taking into consideration the high cost of living, which continues to affect adversely the material condition of the working class, and in view of the accumulation of enormous profits which are being made by great capitalist undertakings;

And further, in consideration of the scarcity of the necessities of life existing in practically every country whilst capitalist enterprise is deliberately curtailing production with the object of obtaining inflated profits;

This Congress is of opinion that no reason exists why the working class should produce wealth with the object of advancing the power and wealth of a small number of capitalists.

This Congress regards the situation as of immediate concern to all workers, whose duty it is to consider the facts; and affirms that all available necessities of life should be placed at the disposal of the community.

This Congress declares that an increase of production can only be secured by the establishment of a new industrial and economic system, in which the exertions of producers will be directed in the interests of the community to the exclusion of capitalist interests, and in which capitalism will no longer retain the power to hinder or thwart these efforts in its own financial interests.

That improvement of the material and moral conditions of life for the workers will only be possible if the foregoing changes are accomplished.

This Congress therefore demands, in the interests of society, the socialisation of land and other means of production. The Congress regards it as essential that commencement should be made forthwith on the socialisation of minerals (coal, ores, salt, phosphate, etc.), all transport undertakings, and, generally speaking, on all branches of production which in the estimation of the proletariat of every country are realisable.

That this transformation is not to be affected by mere transfer of industrial control to the capitalist State, but by active participation of the whole population in industrial and national control, exercised in conjunction with the appropriate Trade Unions.

Furthermore, this Congress specifies that, in the case of those industries not included in this scheme of socialisation, transformation plans must be framed and taken in hand. The right of the workers to co-determination in regulation of production and enterprise must be assured.

This Congress urges the workers throughout the world to use their entire economic and political power, with the authority of the Executive Committee of their respective Organisations, for the realisation of this aim, and instructs the Bureau of the International Federation of Trade Unions to open negotiations with the International Trade Secretariats of Miners, Seafarers and other Transport Workers for the purpose of using every available means to attain the object in view as soon as possible.

Mr. Smit (Amsterdam), Office Workers' International Secretary, wanted the Bureau to communicate with office workers also concerning this question.

The Secretary, Mr. Fimmen, agreed to do this.

*The Moscow International and the Attitude to be adopted thereto.*

Mr. Dumoulin (France), reporting for the Commission, stated that the resolution before them concerning the repudiation of the Moscow attacks was urgently necessary. It was only to the passage declaring that no government, even Communist, can ever be recognised as at the same time the leaders of a Workers' International, that the German, Italian and Norwegian members of the Commission had objected; but he hoped that the German delegation would agree even to this part of the resolution.

Mr. d'Aragona (Italy), speaking on behalf of the Italian delegation, made the following statement:—

In our opinion the charges levelled by the Russians against the International Federation of Trade Unions are to be taken as a protest against the attitude of a few National Trade Union Federations with regard to the war and to the Russian revolution. With this criticism the Italian delegates agree.

On the other hand, we cannot approve of the controversial methods adopted by the Russians, methods which lead them to condemn facts with which they are not properly acquainted and to force all other nations to adopt the same tactics as themselves. The reason, however, why the Italian delegates cannot vote for the resolution is that it might be interpreted as an approval of the former policy of the leaders of a few National Trade Union Federations. We are not voting against the resolution because we do not consider the charge of treason justifiable, and therefore we are abstaining from voting.

Mr. Gryson (Belgium) wanted Mr. d'Aragona to define his attitude to the International quite clearly. Before the Commission he had admitted that in Moscow he pledged himself to force the Trade Unions towards militancy, although he thought the Soviet people really did not know enough about conditions in other countries.

Mr. d'Aragona (Italy) said that he had written a report on this question, but it had unfortunately arrived too late.<sup>1</sup> In it the Italian delegates agreed to the following three conditions. (1) Condemnation of all attempts to expel from Trade Unions any members taking their stand with the militants. (2) Ejection as far as possible of all opportunist Trade Union leaders who go hand in hand with non-socialists. (3) Creation within the Trade Unions of communist centres whose duty it would be vigorously to defend working class interests. Nevertheless, the speaker added, the Italian Trade

<sup>1</sup> The report contains the following passage :—

The conditions which the Third International decided to dictate to the political parties which support its programme do not concern Trade Unions.

The Italian C. G. T., as represented by its delegate to Russia, Ludovic D'Aragona, the general secretary of the Federation, supported the following resolution :

“ The undersigned representatives of the Trade Unions of Russia, England, Italy, Spain and Bulgaria, in conference convened by the Executive Committee of the Third International, considering :

“ that the situation created by the last imperialist war for the proletariat of all countries daily and more emphatically calls for determined action as regards the class war in order to overthrow the capitalist system and establish the communist society ;

“ that to attain the desired results, this action must be international and demands the absolute unity of all workers, organised, no longer by vocation, but by categories of industry ;

“ that so-called social reforms, such as decreases in hours of labour, increases in wages, regulation of labour, etc., while under some circumstances facilitating the class war, are inadequate for the solution of the social problem ; that in the majority of belligerent countries the majority of Trade Unions who support the exclusion of political action proved them

Unions are neither Bolsheviks nor affiliated to the Third International, because they distinctly disapprove of political organisations interfering with the work of Trade Unions.

The Secretary, Mr. Fimmen, pointed out that a seat on the Bureau of the International Federation of Trade Unions had been reserved for the Italians since the last Congress; and that if they had occupied it and used their influence in collaborating practically with others, these divergences of opinion would certainly never have arisen.

Mr. Volan (Norway) opposed the resolution on the ground that it might be considered as favouring counter-revolutionaries.

The voting resulted in the following resolution being passed unanimously, except that Norway voted against it and Italy abstained. Ayes : 22,122,000 : Noes : 150,000 . Abstentions : 2,300,000.

The special Congress of the International Federation of Trade Unions, meeting in London and representing twenty six millions of organised workers in eighteen countries;

Takes note of the fresh attacks and calumnies directed against the Congress by the leaders of the Third International — calumnies and insults which could not possibly be considered as proper methods of discussion between free and civilised men.

The Congress observes that the latest manifesto bears the signatures of Lenin, Zinovieff, Radek, Bela Kun, etc., on one side and on the other side those of Tomsky, Lozowski, Rosmer and Chabline, who claim, contrary to the facts, to represent an International Federation of Trade Unions.

The Congress also observes that the signatories of this manifesto set down their declaration of war by writing that : The International of Moscow will destroy the “ Yellow ” Amsterdam International.

---

selves, during the unhappy years of the war, to be the slaves of imperialist capitalism, and by this sinister action have hindered the complets emancipation of the workers ;

“ that the working classes should organise on a trade union basis in a powerful revolutionary class association, which will struggle with all its might, side by side with the political organisation of the international communist proletariat and closely linked to it, for the triumph of the social revolution and the establishment of the universal Soviet Republic ;

“ that the governing classes are making every effort to stifle by all means in their power the movement of the oppressed towards freedom ;

“ that the dictatorship of the bourgeoisie of the world must be opposed, as a transitional but decisive measure, by the dictatorship of the proletariat, which alone is able to overcome the resistance of the exploiters and to ensure and establish the rise to power of the proletariat ;

“ that the International Federation of Trade Unions of Amsterdam is incapable, by reason of its programme and methods of action, of securing the triumph of the above mentioned principles and the victory of the proletarian masses in all countries ;

“ resolves :

“ 1. to condemn all attempts to exclude “ advanced ” elements from existing trade unions ; these elements ought, on the contrary, to undertake vigorous action with a view to eliminating from the leadership of the trade union movement the opportunists who have co-operated and by acquiescing in war still co-operate with capitalist imperialism and continue to serve its interests by participating in the empty mockery represented by the League of Nations ;

“ 2. to undertake in trade unions throughout the world methodical

The Congress considers, judging from the facts of the situation, that these attacks do not emanate from the Russian proletariat and that the latter could not be regarded as in any degree responsible for them.

Further, the Congress considers that these calumnious criticisms and this declaration of war prove either a total ignorance of the composition and actions of the International Federation of Trade Unions or else an evident bad faith arising out of the unwholesome desire to destroy the workers' organisations in every country.

The congress repudiates with all its energy the calumnies directed against itself and against the workers' International movement.

While rejecting all these calumnies, the International Federation of Trade Unions declares that it will allow itself neither to be divided nor to be destroyed.

It assures the central affiliated organisations of their autonomy and freedom of action, but at the same time it forbids any obedience on their part to any resolutions from outside bodies to support their particular movements in the Trade Union International.

The Congress affirms that the International Federation of Trade Unions and the central organisations in every country are directing their efforts towards social transformation and the abolition of the system of capitalist exploitation. This is being done while taking into account the customs, the traditions and the respective situation of every country.

It is for these reasons that the Congress recalls the fact that the Trade Union International opposes the governments which support the counter-revolution and favour the military enterprises directed against the peoples who are on their way to freedom.

In spite of these calumnies and those who publish them, the Congress sends an appeal to the workers of Russia, as to all workers who have been misled as to the aims of the Trade Union International.

The Congress hereby declares its full solidarity in sympathy with their sufferings and revolutionary efforts. It invites them to join the International Federation of Trade Unions and to add their fighting strength to that of other workers in order to establish one single fighting line against social reaction.

At the beginning of the last day's sitting the Chairman, Mr. J. H. Thomas, submitted a proposal of the Commission to be added to the resolution already passed concerning the

---

propaganda, in order to create within every organisation a communist section whose incessant activity will achieve the triumph of the programme of the Moscow International;

« to establish a Committee for international action and struggle for the transformation of the trade union movement towards this end: this committee will act as a Provisional International Soviet of Trade Unions, in co-operation with the Executive Committee of the Third International and on lines laid down by the Congress. This Soviet will consist of representatives of the national workers' organisations supporting it. A representative of the International Trade Union Soviet shall be admitted to the Executive Committee of the Third International, which shall in turn send a representative to sit on the International Trade Union Soviet ».

Signed :

A. Losovsky for the Central Council of Russian Trade Unions.

L. D'Aragona for the General Federation of Labour, Italy.

Angel Pestagna of the National Federation of Labour, Spain.

N. Chabline for the Trade Union League, Bulgaria.

A. Rosmer for the revolutionary minority Trade Unionists, France.

J. Milkitsch for the General Confederation of Labour, Jugo-Slavia.

Micandze for the Trade Union minority, Georgia.

Moscow International. The Congress then passed the following clause, the Norwegian delegates voting against, the British and Czechs abstaining.

The Congress declares that to govern a country and to claim to direct the workers' International are two things different and irreconcilable; that it is inadmissible that the chiefs of a government, even communist, should be at the same time the chiefs of the workers' International.

#### *The Situation in the Ruhr District. Closing Meeting*

The Reporter, Mr. Jouhaux (France), stated that the delegation sent by the Bureau of the International Federation of Trade Unions to the Ruhr Basin and afterwards to Berlin consisted of Messrs Jouhaux (France), Mertens (Belgium), Fimmen (International Trade Union Bureau, Holland), and Merrheim (France). Merrheim replaced the British delegate, who was unable to go. The delegation had submitted to the Congress a detailed report in writing, also its conclusions, expressed in the form of a resolution. It was convinced that the Ruhr basin was overpopulated, very badly supplied with food, and really in a highly critical condition. A great deal of news published by certain newspapers, in the hope of arousing more mistrust between nation and nation, was invented, for the German miners were doing everything they could to keep the engagements into which they had entered. In fact they had kept them, although some of the promises made about their receiving better food had not yet been kept. French workers, he said, were determined to strive with all their might to combat militarism, if they knew that they were being backed up by German workers in Germany.

We French workers know that we would never work with machine guns pointed at us, and we cannot expect German workers to do so either. In these circumstances it is the duty of German workers to refuse to work, and then the French working-classes would do their utmost to support their German brothers. We are quite aware that this is no academic decision, but one of far-reaching importance, which may perhaps have to be carried out tomorrow.

Mr. Legien (Germany), speaking on behalf of the German delegates, thanked the Commission for its enquiry. He remarked that the Commission had satisfied itself that the miners were doing their very best, but they had only been able to do so by working overtime. Two extra half shifts had been worked per week, and this had been done at the expense of the miners' health. He also urged that if any more negotiations took place concerning a Convention on coal supply, Trade Union representatives from France and England should be present. Speaking at some length, he then blamed the way in which the Peace Treaty was often interpreted by the Allies, instancing their demand for the destruction

of Diesel motors. The German workers, he said, did not want to be pitied, but to be understood. They were quite ready to fulfil the Peace Treaty conditions, if it were not made impossible for them to do so by the harassing manner in which the different clauses were interpreted. In that case Germany must certainly be destroyed, but it was doubtful whether such destruction might not result in nullifying all the resolutions passed here against Bolshevism. Directly the war was over, the German Trade Unions had proposed to help reconstruct the devastated territories. In so doing they wanted to collaborate with French workers, and it was not the fault of the workers that as yet it had not been possible to arrive at any such "social Entente". Militarism in Germany was crushed, "but we fear", he said, "that in other countries it is still continuing its disastrous effects".

The Chairman, Mr. J. H. Thomas, declared that it was senseless to destroy factories or machinery which could be used for peaceful purposes. The British policy was to reconstruct the world on a basis of peace, and to do so with the help of a League of Nations embracing all peoples. Therefore when Mr. Legien warned them against militarism, he ought first and foremost to address his remarks to their French comrades, whose government was determined to continue its imperialist policy. Lasting peace, however, could never come about until nations agreed to cease hating one another and began to understand one another. It was madness and showed disregard for the teachings of history to assume that Germany could be wiped out; but it was the duty of their German comrades to dissipate the fears entertained that Germany might again pursue a militarist policy. As had been stated at the Congress, the French workers were ready to side with their German comrades and to help them ward off all militarist attacks. The workers of every other country were ready to do likewise.

The following resolution was then unanimously passed :—

That this special International Trade Union Congress, assembled in London on the 22nd to 27th November 1920, in consideration of the report of the Committee of Investigation instituted by the International Federation of Trade Unions into the condition of the Ruhr district, declares itself strongly opposed to the occupation of this district by the Entente troops.

This Congress affirms that a measure of this kind will be an act of unjustified brute force, a violation of the pact already agreed upon, a violation of working class liberties, a set-back to the aspirations of the working class in their endeavour to accomplish the socialisation of minerals, and an attack on the working class by international capitalism.

Fully convinced that the occupation of the Ruhr district will be followed by grave consequences; will only lend support to Reaction and Militarism; will only enhance the danger to the world; will only produce new and insurmountable obstacles to a return to normal international conditions; this Congress declares that the organised workers are prepared to use all and every means to oppose such measures and to prevent a dictatorship over the workers in the Ruhr district.

This Congress declares that the coal problem cannot be solved by military domination, but by international organisation of production and distribution

of all available fuel, as already demanded by the international miners' congress held at Geneva.

This Congress declares in particular that production in the Ruhr district is incontestably dependent upon a good supply of food commodities for the miners.

In consideration of the fact that the miners have conformed in every detail with the obligations contracted at Spa, this Congress demands the fulfilment of those counter-promises made to the miners. This Congress draws attention to the serious condition of the working class people in the Ruhr district and to the misery which imperils the lives of the younger generation, and demands that measures be taken to eradicate these loathsome conditions.

This Congress, in conclusion, declares that restoration of the mines from the chaos caused by the war can only be effected by the solidarity of workers resolved upon unity and peace.

Brief closing addresses were then delivered by Mr. Jaszaï (Hungary) and Mr. Hueber (Austria), who both thanked the International for having shown itself so ready to help their countries; also by Mr. Jouhaux and the Chairman, Mr. J. H. Thomas. The Congress closed on Saturday, November 27th, at noon.

## STUDIES AND REPORTS

### already issued

Where the English or French text of a Report has not yet been published it will be issued at a later date.

### Series A

- No 1. THE AGREEMENT BETWEEN THE SPANISH WORKERS' ORGANISATIONS, issued September 25th 1920. *French and English.*
- " 2. THE DISPUTE IN THE METAL INDUSTRY IN ITALY. TRADE UNION CONTROL OF INDUSTRY, issued September 25th 1920. *French and English.*
- " 3. ANNUAL MEETING OF THE TRADES UNION CONGRESS 1920, issued October 4th 1920. *French and English.*
- " 4. INTERNATIONAL CONGRESS OF WORKERS IN THE FOOD AND DRINK TRADES, issued October 11th 1920. *French and English.*
- " 5. THE BRITISH GOVERNMENT AND THE MINERS' FEDERATION OF GREAT BRITAIN. CONFERENCE BETWEEN SIR ROBERT HORNE AND THE MINERS' FEDERATION, issued October 11th 1920. *French and English.*
- " 6. THE CONGRESS OF THE LABOUR AND SOCIALIST INTERNATIONAL, issued October 14th 1920. *French and English.*
- " 7. THE MINERS' INTERNATIONAL CONGRESS, issued October 19th 1920. *French and English.*
- " 8. THE INTERNATIONAL LABOUR ORGANISATION. A COMPARISON, issued October 21st 1920. *French and English.*
- " 9. THE INTERNATIONAL CONGRESS OF METAL WORKERS, issued October 22nd 1920. *French and English.*
- " 10. THE BRITISH GOVERNMENT AND THE MINERS' FEDERATION OF GREAT BRITAIN. CONFERENCE BETWEEN THE GOVERNMENT AND THE TRIPLE INDUSTRIAL ALLIANCE, issued October 26th 1920. *French and English.*
- " 11. THE DISPUTE IN THE METAL INDUSTRY IN ITALY. TRADE UNION CONTROL OF INDUSTRY. (Second part) issued November 4th 1920. *French and English.*
- " 12. THE FOURTH INTERNATIONAL CONGRESS OF BOOKBINDERS, issued November 26th 1920. *French and English.*
- " 13. THE MINERS' STRIKE IN GREAT BRITAIN, issued December 21st 1920. *French and English.*
- " 14. THE XVth CONGRESS OF THE GENERAL CONFEDERATION OF LABOUR (CONFÉDÉRATION GÉNÉRALE DU TRAVAIL) held at Orleans the 27th September to the 2nd October 1920, issued December 23rd 1920. *French and English.*
- " 15. THE INTERNATIONAL CONGRESS OF GENERAL FACTORY WORKERS, issued January 24th 1921. *French and English.*
- " 16. TENDENCIES OF EUROPEAN LABOUR LEGISLATION SINCE THE WAR, issued February 11th 1921. *French and English.*
- " 17. THE GROWTH OF TRADE UNIONISM DURING THE TEN YEARS 1910-1919, issued February 16th 1921. *French and English.*

### Series B

- No 1. COAL PRODUCTION IN THE RUHR DISTRICT. Enquiry by the International Labour Office, end of May 1920, issued September 1st 1920. *French and English.*
- " 2. PAPERS RELATING TO SCHEMES OF INTERNATIONAL ORGANISATION FOR THE DISTRIBUTION OF RAW MATERIALS AND FOOD STUFFS, issued October 5th. 1920. *French and English.*
- " 3. THE CONDITIONS OF LABOUR AND PRODUCTION IN THE UPPER SILESIAN COALFIELD, issued December 10th 1920. *French and English.*
- " 4. THE SOCIALISATION OF COAL MINES IN GERMANY, issued January 25th 1921. *French and English.*
- " 5. THE ESSEN MEMORANDUM ON THE SOCIALISATION OF THE COAL MINES IN GERMANY (6 Nov. 20), issued 28th January 1921. *French and English.*
- " 6. WORKS COUNCILS IN GERMANY issued January 29th 1921, *French and English.*
- " 7. LE PROJET DE LOI SUR LE CONTRÔLE OUVRIER EN ITALIE, issued February 28th 1921. *French only.*

### Series C

- No 1. BRITISH LEGISLATION ON UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE, issued October 26th 1920. *French and English.*
- " 2. GOVERNMENT ACTION IN DEALING WITH UNEMPLOYMENT IN ITALY, issued October 27th 1920. *French and English.*
- " 3. THE BULGARIAN LAW ON COMPULSORY LABOUR, issued November 4th 1920. *French and English.*
- " 4. THE ACTION OF THE SWISS GOVERNMENT IN DEALING WITH UNEMPLOYMENT, issued November 13th 1920. *French and English.*
- " 5. THE ORGANISATION OF UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE AND EMPLOYMENT EXCHANGES IN FRANCE, issued February 21th 1921. *French and English.*

### Series D

- No 1. STAFF REGULATIONS ON THE FRENCH RAILWAYS, issued September 4th 1920. *French and English.*

### Série E

- No 1. COMPENSATION FOR WAR DISABLEMENT IN FRANCE. ACT OF MARCH 31st, 1919, issued February 28th 1921. *French and English.*

### Series F

- No 1. CANCER OF THE BLADDER AMONG WORKERS IN ANILINE FACTORIES, issued February 23th 1921. *French and English.*

### Series H

- No 1. CONSUMERS' CO-OPERATIVE SOCIETIES IN 1919 (Denmark and Sweden), issued September 8th 1920. *French and English.*
- " 2. SEVENTH CONGRESS OF THE BELGIAN CO-OPERATIVE OFFICE, issued September 25th 1920. *French and English.*

Series K.

- Nº 1. FIRST INTERNATIONAL CONGRESS OF LANDWORKERS' UNIONS AFFILIATED TO THE INTERNATIONAL FEDERATION OF TRADE UNIONS, issued November 1920. *French and English.*
- " 2. AGRARIAN CONDITIONS IN SPAIN, issued November 10th 1920. *French and English.*
- " 3. SMALL HOLDINGS IN SCOTLAND, issued November 12th 1920. *French and English.*
- " 4. THE EIGHT-HOUR DAY IN ITALIAN AGRICULTURE, issued December 10th 1920. *French and English.*
- " 5. THE EIGHT-HOUR DAY IN AGRICULTURE, BEFORE THE FRENCH CHAMBER OF DEPUTIES, issued February 10th 1921. *French and English.*